

## Sherlock versus Sherlock Holmes stories

**Título:** Sherlock versus Sherlock Holmes stories. **Target:** ESO Y BACHILLERATO. **Asignatura:** Inglés. **Autor:** M<sup>a</sup> Julia Muñoz Zanón, Licenciada en Traducción e Interpretación, Profesora de Inglés en Educación Secundaria y Bachillerato.

This activity is addressed to students from 2<sup>nd</sup> of ESO to 4<sup>th</sup> ESO or even Bachillerato. It lasts 4-6 sessions.

A good way to introduce students to literature, to the classical works of sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is to take profit of the new successful TV series produced by the BBC "*Sherlock*". When the teacher comments that the students are going to watch the first chapter of the series, some of them are really excited, as they have previously seen it on the TV. Other students do not know what the teacher is talking about, who is Sherlock or sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The teacher asks the students, who have seen the series or those who know about the character to introduce the plot, the main characters, the time/period the place where the action takes place.... The teacher draws at the board the following mind map:

SHERLOCK HOLMES detective/police consultant				
CHARACTERISTICS	METHODS	HOBBIES	FRIENDS	SETTING/TIME
He's tall (6 inches-1,80m)	observation	violin	Dr Watson	21 <sup>st</sup> C/ LONDON
Intelligent- extroverted	deduction	chemistry	Lestrade	
grey eyes-black hair	sms/Internet	anatomy	Ms Hudson	
a coat-hat-scarff	GPS		Mycroff/Molly	
nicotine patches				

Then, the teacher explains briefly that Sherlock Holmes is a detective invented by sir Arthur Conan Doyle who was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He studied medicine and one of his teachers Joseph Bell is the real person Sherlock Holmes is based on. Dr. Bell amazed his students because he could guess the jobs and lifestyle of his patients by simply observing them carefully.

When Conan Doyle finished his studies, he worked for a time as a doctor but he soon turned to writing. His first novel "*A Study in Pink*" had none success in Britain but it was a hit in America and then many short stories and novels based on Sherlock Holmes appeared in the Strand Magazine, a popular monthly magazine. However, from the beginning, Conan Doyle wanted to get rid of his character and to write about serious historic novels. He finally decided to put an end to his famous creature and "killed"him in the short story "*The Final Solution*".

But there were so many complaints to the Strand Magazine and it lost so many readers that the magazine accepted any proposal made by Conan Doyle to write again about the famous detective. He agreed to publish "*The Hound of the Baskerville*" setting the adventure years before his fall in the Reichenbach waterfall. It was such a success that the magazine suddenly obtained more than 30,000 readers.

One year later, thanks to the intervention of an American editor's cheque, Sherlock Holmes got back to life in the short story "*The Empty House*" which was followed by other 33 adventures.

Once the character and author are introduced, the students are going to see the modern version of the first story entitled "*Study in Pink*". In the third session, they will read an adapted version of that story. In this first chapter of the TV Series Sherlock, the characters are introduced and they started their first adventure. It is very important to say that the series takes place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century while the original works are set in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The teacher asks the students to pay attention to the chapter because after the vision they are going to answer the following questions:

- 1.-What happens to Dr Watson at the beginning of the chapter? He dreams about the (Afghanistan)war.
- 2.-How does he meet Sherlock Holmes? A common friend introduces them.
- 3.-Where do they meet? In the morgue/laboratory
- 4.-What are Sherlock deductions about his future flatmate? He deduces Watson profession observing him.
- 5.-Where are they going to live? They are going to live at 221 B, Baker Street
- 6.-Who is the landlady of the flat? Mrs Hudson, who was helped by Sherlock in a previous case
- 7.-What is Sherlock's profession? He is a detective/police consultant
- 8.-What does he ask Dr Watson when Inspector Lestrade arrives to the flat? When Inspector Lestrade visits Sherlock for help, Sherlock asks Watson to go with him.
- 9.- What do they find in the empty house? A woman who has apparently committed suicide.
- 10.- How did this woman die? Someone forced her to take a pill
- 11.-What is the method employed by Sherlock to solve the mystery? He deduces the clues on the crime scene and he looks for a pink suitcase.
- 12.- Who is Mycroft? Sherlock's brother who wants Watson to cooperate with him
- 13.-How will you describe Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson?  
Sherlock Holmes: neurotic, maniac, careful, meticulous, fidgety, bossy, conceited, intelligent. ...  
Dr. Watson: quiet, loyal, gently, good natured, flirtatious...
- 14.-Who is Moriarty? Sherlock's arch enemy.
- 15.-Give your opinion about the chapter.

This questionnaire is answered at home and on the next day it is corrected. The next step to deal with on the next sessions is to read the short story on which the chapter is based "*A Study in Scarlet*". Two-three sessions depending on the students level. It is up to the teacher to read the book at home while they also watching the series chapter. When the reading is finished, they are going to have a look to the questions answered for the BBC chapter.

Then it is time to compare the two versions of the story. They will say the differences they have found in the reading and in the TV series. One of the most important differences is that the murdered is a man and not a

woman. The killer was a taxi driver in the TV series while it is a coachman in the book. Mycroft and Moriarty do not appear in the book however they are presented in the series.

They will discover similarities, as it is the case of the scene crime with the word "RACHE" on the floor and the same conclusion which refers to a name is made even though it is a distraction of the murderer.

Later, the teacher will show students the credit titles of the TV Series "*The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*". Now students have a clear idea of the traditional image of Sherlock Holmes in books, TV and its modern version.

It is time to retake the mind gap seen in the first session and compare the different items (characters, the period of time, the set...) from the three different versions of Sherlock Holmes. Students should use comparative and superlatives adjectives. It could be necessary that the teacher should review this grammatical point.

#### SHERLOCK HOLMES detective/police consultant

CHARACTERISTICS	METHODS	HOBBIES	FRIENDS	SETTING/TIME
He's tall (6 inches-1,80m)	observation	violin	Dr Watson	19 <sup>th</sup> C
Intelligent- extroverted	deduction	chemistry	Lestrade	Victorian London
grey eyes-black hair	children beggars	anatomy	Ms Hudson	
a hunted coat-typical hat				
smokes on a pipe				

Finally, the students will chose the version of the story they have enjoyed most and they will write a composition about what they have learnt about the detective. It is quite possible they choose the modern version of the detective because they identify themselves more with the modern lifestyle. However, they may know the original works and the classical version of Sherlock and who knows, some students may want to read more stories about these two fantastic detective characters. ●

#### Bibliografía

- BBC "Sherlock".
- Conan Doyle, sir Arthur. A Study In Pink. Penguin Classics.
- Granada Television "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes".